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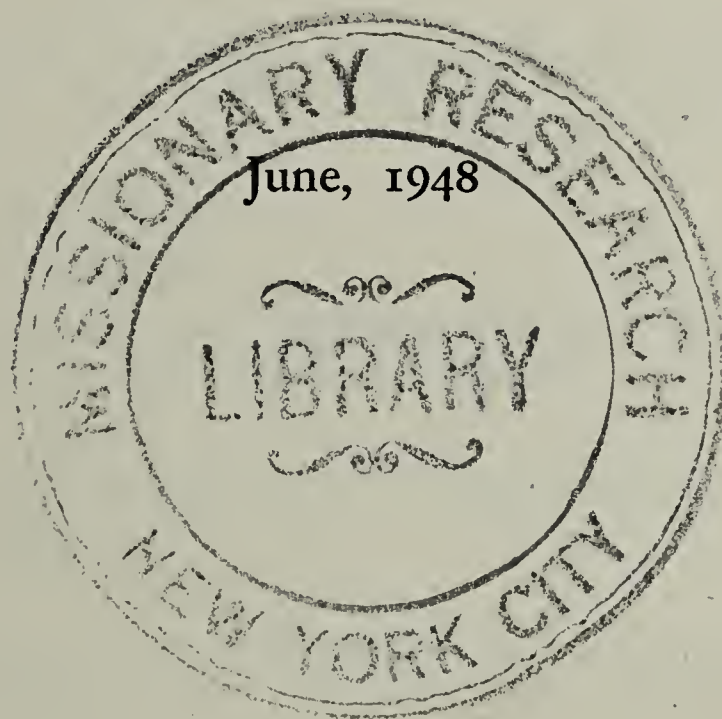
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Occasional Bulletin

1506
JUL 13 1948

The Challenge of Communism to Christianity

*A series of reprint articles dealing with various
aspects of Communism and the Christian answer*



Committee to Study a Christian Approach to Communism
of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America

156 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

Contents

	PAGE
THE APPEAL OF COMMUNISM	5
<i>by</i> MATTHEW SPINKA	
CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM	9
<i>by</i> JOHN C. BENNETT	
WHAT'S WRONG WITH COMMUNISM?	14
<i>by</i> NORMAN THOMAS	
COMMUNISM IN CHINA	18
<i>by</i> W. PLUMER MILLS	
THE CZECH ROAD TO COMMUNISM	23
<i>by</i> KENNETH D. MILLER	
The above five articles are reprinted from <i>The Presbyterian Tribune</i> , May, 1948 issue, by permission.	
TWO FORMS OF TYRANNY	27
<i>by</i> REINHOLD NIEBUHR	
This article is reprinted from <i>Christianity and Crisis</i> , February 2, 1948 issue, by permission.	
THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO COMMUNISM	33
<i>by</i> L. S. ALBRIGHT	
THE COMPREHENSIVE MINISTRY TO COMMUNITY NEEDS	35
<i>by</i> J. MERLE DAVIS	
A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON COMMUNISM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR CHRISTIANITY	41
<i>by</i> L. S. ALBRIGHT AND W. PLUMER MILLS	

The above two studies and bibliography were prepared for the Committee to Study a Christian Approach to Communism for consideration in connection with the Advance Program of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.



The Appeal of Communism

I

COMMUNISM's appeal lies chiefly in the concrete and positive program for the building of the communist *substitute* for the Kingdom of God—a classless society, free from social injustice and economic exploitation. It seeks to accomplish this through scientific, economic, and political organization of society, as against the secularist futilitarianism or the old bourgeois capitalistic order of society.

No one can rightly understand the full force of this appeal who does not realize that particularly since the nineteenth century vast numbers of men have been motivated by a purely secularistic world view. For them God was and is *dead*. In Nietzsche, who spoke for this class of men, the fact that “the great Pan is dead” was an undoubted truth, but he admitted it sadly. Dostoevsky is obsessed with the problem of the man who has lost faith in God and yet has to live—but what for? He realized—as, alas! many people do not—that if the Christian God is dead, the Christian ethic which is woven into the very fabric of our Western culture no longer can serve as the presupposition of the life of our society. A new world has to be built on other than Christian ethics.

T. G. Masaryk, preparing for the academic career at the University of Vienna, analyzed this situation in his thesis. He observed that during the nineteenth century the percentage of suicides among the well-to-do and educated classes had greatly increased. He traced the cause to the loss of faith. Men had nothing to live for. Life was meaningless and, therefore, not worth living. It was “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” In short, it was futile.

But such philosophy of futilitarianism is intolerable. Man has to worship *something*: if not God, then half-gods. An intelligent man cannot live in a meaningless world. This is the reason why Marx, Hitler, and Mussolini found among young men such enthusiastic acceptance: they literally gave these young people something to live for *and even die for*. It was not always worth dying for. What a pity that Christianity failed to arouse the enthusiasm that these causes did! But at least the secularist causes were positive and concrete—a challenge to build a new world. They saved men from the despair of vacuity and futility.

World View

The Marxist gospel is not mere economic theory. It is a world view, a philosophy of life, a religion. It demands total loyalty, regimented

cooperation in a rigidly organized party, a supreme devotion to the particular task allotted to the individual member. Subordination to the will of the party is as cardinal a principle with a Communist as obedience to his superior is to a Jesuit. *In fact there is a great similarity between the two organizations.* Individualism, so characteristic of the Renaissance culture in the last days of which we live, is anathema to the Communist. To him the *society* as a whole is superior to any of its individual members. He rejects the Christian principle that personality is the highest value in the world—the good of society is to him the highest value. Accordingly, he is necessarily totalitarian. That is why communism is hostile to Christianity: it will not brook divided loyalty. Christianity is regarded as providing sanctions for the old order, for the *status quo*. It is for this reason that it is not a matter of indifference for communism whether or not Christianity continues to exist. As the foundation of the bourgeois capitalistic social order, *it must be destroyed*. Or, to change the figure, the Christian Church is a “dram shop,” as Bakunin characterized it, where men drown the misery of their earthly existence in the vain hope of heavenly reward. Marx expresses the same idea in the more famous phrase that “religion is the opiate of the people.” But Communists are impatient of human misery: suffering, injustice, hunger are not to be endured, condoned, justified—but eliminated, abolished.

Secular Apocalypse

It is this insistence on a good life in a good world which inspires the best and most idealistic of Communists to devote themselves to building a new world. It is the secularization of the Jewish apocalyptic hope for the Messianic kingdom—one remembers that Marx was of Jewish ancestry—or the extreme secularization of the Christian dream of the Kingdom of God. Communists derive almost fanatical strength for their faith from the conviction that there exists an elemental force in nature or human history which works inevitably in the direction of the communist classless society. Marxian communism, to them, is not a mere theory; it is a description of a *scientifically ascertained fact*. They believe themselves to be “in tune with the universal, predetermined wave of the future.”

It is literally true that the bourgeois capitalistic society, by its own inherent injustices, *actually did produce communism*. As the Christian, particularly the Calvinistic Christian, derives his deepest assurance from his faith that the Divine Will shall ultimately conquer, despite all the rage, malice, and stupidity of man individually and human society collectively, so the Communist rests in the faith that the economic forces which are fundamental to history and society are on his side. That is the essence of dialectical materialism.

But it would be a grave blunder to think of the matter only in terms of such idealistic motivation. While no movement succeeds without self-sacrificial loyalty and sincerity, we know from observing actual conditions under which the Bolshevik party seized power in Russia that there were motives far from idealistic. For example, it is wrong to suppose that the 1917 October Revolution overthrew the Czarist regime. That event took place, rather, in *February*, 1917. Moreover, the provisional government which followed under Prince Lvov and Alexander Kerensky aspired to establish a parliamentary democracy of the type usual in democratic countries. *It was this democratic government which the Soviets overthrew.* Why? Because the one-half per cent of the membership of the Bolshevik party, in some miraculous fashion, had converted the entire nation to communist ideology? *Nothing could be farther from the fact!* Lenin, whom the German high command had transported in the famous sealed train from Switzerland to Russia, won his victory on the basis of a very *uncommunistic* platform:

1. Immediate cessation of war (no reparations or indemnities).
2. Distribution of land to the peasants.
3. Power to the organized workers.

All three of these original theses of the program were later, when the Soviets were established in power, subverted.

Danger of Power

How could the insignificant minority of the ruling party nationalize the property of the whole nation? One cannot understand that except by realizing—as Berdyaev so well pointed out in his book, *The Origins of Russian Communism*—that the psychology of the Russian people was different. The Russians never had the Renaissance; they never adopted the Roman concept of property in fee simple. To them land belonged to all, to be used for sustenance and not for absolute exploitation. Therefore, the Russian people were far more predisposed to communism than the Western peoples generally are.

But having seized power in Russia, the motivation of the new communist leaders had been subjected to the familiar change which few men in power succeed in avoiding. The Soviet government, instead of “withering away” as a state under proletarian control—according to Marx—was supposed to do, has become one of the most rigidly controlled police states. Instead of attaining the stage of “classless society,” it has developed new social classes, with a highly privileged upper stratum composed of the bureaucracy—the technical, professional, and managerial personnel. The Communist party itself has been so radically transformed

that in 1934 only 9.3 per cent of the delegates to the Congress were "workers from production." The power of the Politburo, which is the real government of the Soviet Union, is more *absolute than that of the most absolute monarch of past history*. Since the state is the owner of everything and employs the whole nation, every citizen is wholly at the mercy of the state, his very livelihood as well as practically all else.

Today the only way to secure power in the Soviet Union or other communist-dominated countries is by way of the Communist party. Can one doubt that men everywhere—young and old—seek power? Is this not an answer to the question—what in the communist gospel appeals to men?

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Christianity and Communism

IN WRITING about Christianity *and* communism it is important to think of both as they are embodied in *institutions* and *actual human behavior* and not to contrast the best in the Christian faith with the worst in communist practice. Communism is the Marxist dream of a classless society that is wholly just and rational but it is also what the communist parties do around the world. The rulers of Russia and the communist leaders in other countries are far removed from the best in historical Marxism but it must never be forgotten that the greatest strength of communism is its *appeal to people*, to exploited and neglected people who are won to it because it does carry for them the promise of economic justice. Christianity is the gospel of Jesus Christ, the biblical faith that finds some expression in all the churches, but Christianity is also what Christians have made of it and one of the things that they did make of it, when communism as a modern movement was born, was a spiritual sanction for the reactionary and unjust institutions of society. In contrast to Christianity at this point the communist protest has had real validity. It is one aspect of communism which Christians should remember that came as a judgment upon the churches. Its very atheism is in part the result of the *moral failure of the churches*.

I want to make clear at the outset that the conclusion to be drawn from this way of contrasting Christianity and communism is not that we have here two movements which are both good and bad and that therefore we can be neutral in the present conflict between them. My chief contention in this article is that Christianity always points to the sources of its own correction while the aberrations of communism are inescapable because of its profound misunderstanding of human nature and its lack of any transcendent source of criticism upon a communist society. It is, however, very important to bear in mind the way in which communism is a response to the failures of Christians, else we are in danger of making our necessary opposition to communism a self-righteous religious crusade. This has been the great fault in the Roman Catholic opposition to communism because Roman Catholicism can never admit that the *Church is itself responsible* for the evil that it must oppose.

Faith in New World

Communism as it moves the millions and millions of people in the world who believe in it is not cynical or nihilistic as was national socialism. Even in Russia, where there is a compound of nationalism and

communism and where it is difficult to know how far the nationalism is ultimately dominated by fear or by limitless ambition, the youth have a moral health that is different from the results of national socialist training. They are primarily builders and not destroyers. Communism from Marx through Stalin—in spite of great differences between Marx and Stalin—is a faith in a new world that can only be brought to birth when capitalistic institutions and their psychological and cultural roots are destroyed. This faith becomes for them the justification for all of the ruthlessness that seems necessary in the course of the revolution and of the long drawn out dictatorship which followed it in Russia and will follow revolution wherever Communists gain power. There is no racial hatred in communism and this means that the enemies whom Communists seek to neutralize or destroy have no indelible mark upon them. It is not correct to assume that to be opposed to a class is the same thing as to be opposed to a race because classes are in comparison with races changing phenomena.

The good aspects of communism from the Christian point of view have two quite different effects. On the one hand they make communism more of a snare than fascism or national socialism. Communism appeals to many idealistic spirits who loathed both the aims and the methods of fascism. The moral confusion that it creates even in America is vastly greater than was the case with fascism in any of its forms. How much more is this true in such a country as Czechoslovakia! On the other hand, we can say of communism that its main source of strength is not military power and that in the long run it would be possible to live in the same world with it, checking it by finding another route to social justice that would undercut its appeal. I doubt if it would have been possible to live for long in the same world with the Nazis.

The Conflicts

There are two conflicts between communism and Christianity which I shall now emphasize.

(1) *Communism absolutizes a particular movement in history and promises that this movement will bring complete redemption.* It teaches that there is no God above this movement and it has no understanding of the persistence of human sin within it. The great fault of communism is not its theoretical atheism but its *practical idolatry*. The atheism might be sloughed off but the idolatry is too close to its center to be easily overcome. Unless one has read communist literature or known Communists personally it is difficult to realize how fantastic its optimism about the future is and how complete the redemption that is promised. One expression of this optimism is the belief that after the revolution

has done its work the state as a coercive institution will wither away. This is a natural inference from the idea that the state is merely an instrument by which one class keeps other classes in subjection. In an order in which there are no classes there need be no state. Religion will also wither away because all religions are ways of escaping from evil and suffering which have as their cause wrong economic institutions. However much the Communists in Russia may make concessions to the Church, this belief about the future of religion remains.

Redemption

This belief in communism as an absolute movement of redemption develops a form of complete human self-sufficiency that is incompatible with the Christian understanding of man's dependence upon God. It precludes any transcendent judgment upon the communist society. It creates a false optimism and fails to prepare the people in a communist society for the continuing sin that goes with new forms of power. This lack of criticism is present now and we have the spectacle of an idealism that promises a world that will need no police but is unable to keep its own excessive use of the police under criticism. One of the consequences of this false idealism is that it causes those who share it to divide the world between themselves with their claims to absolute righteousness on one side and all who oppose them on the other—all who are counted without discrimination reactionaries, Fascists, war-mongers. It is a common human trait to divide the world between oneself and one's opponents in this self-righteous way and Christians have not been free from it. But Christians are without excuse for they should know that the line that is most significant is not to be drawn between themselves and their opponents but rather right down through their own souls.

(2) *The second point of conflict between Christianity and communism is in the attitude of Christians and Communists toward persons.* It may be true that in their far-off utopia the Communists expect the individual person to come into his own. Certainly the early Marxist attacks upon capitalism were in the interests of personal freedom. But communism now is known by its practices during the period of the revolution and during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In Russia and in country after country where Communists have gained power communism shows itself as a terror against persons who oppose it. Opponents are no more than obstacles to be removed; they are not persons to be redeemed. There is to be a social redemption later but that has nothing to do with the meaning or the fate of those persons who are the victims on the way.

Persecution

There are problems here which a Christian in honesty must face. Religious persecution in the minds of some Christians may have been a means of saving the souls of the persecuted but more often it has been a method of unifying society by terror against those who opposed the dominant religion. The justification of persecution on the ground that it was a means of saving the souls of the persecuted was wrong but it was compatible with the belief that even the erring soul was an object of the divine love. Religious persecution for political reasons was in the same class with communist persecution. Christians in wartime, when they have believed in participating in war, have usually been willing to use any method that would bring victory and even the Church has never been anything but halting in its effort to draw a line between morally permissible and morally forbidden methods of warfare. So, in time of war, Christians have not been so different from Communists in time of revolution. It should be said that here the great difference between Christianity and communism is that Christians should know that they and their opponents or enemies belong together before God and they should realize that, tragic as the situation is in which they seek to destroy their enemies, they never can rid themselves of concern for enemies as children of God. Indeed the sense of belonging to the same Church as the enemy has been a vital factor in preserving this attitude. Whether this is purely sentimental or a real Christian attitude will be shown whenever there is the possibility of reconciliation with the enemy or opponent. There is a spiritual background here that is lacking in communism. If Christians lack it, they are without excuse.

Coercion

These differences between Christianity and communism come to a head whenever Communists seize power in a nation. Their dictatorship is fastened upon the nation. There is an end of criticism, of any kind of openness in the society. Communists will use any method to coerce the minds and the consciences of all who oppose them. They have the naive belief that, after their work is completed, freedom will return spontaneously. But the institutions of freedom are tender plants and they do not grow easily anywhere, least of all in soil prepared by communist terror and duplicity. Communists who have been taught by the Russians can hardly be expected to understand the meaning of political freedom or of the personal freedoms that are protected by political freedom. We can expect nothing else but a closed society, a society in which men, perhaps with good intentions, create a form of power that they

cannot control and which becomes increasingly corrupt and oppressive while it is engaged in perpetuating itself.

As I write these harsh things about communism as it exists, I feel strongly the *tragedy* of it all. Here is a movement that began as a *moral protest* against injustices in both feudal and capitalistic societies. It met a spiritual need that the Christian Church had failed to meet. It still draws many conscientious souls who are outraged by social wrongs and it gives them a total conception of life that makes more sense to them than any other which they have encountered. And yet because it has no transcendent faith to preserve it from idolatry and from uncritical fanaticism and because it has no real understanding of the dignity of the person or of the meaning of personal freedom, its revolutions lead to a new order of oppression with no promise of release. All this came about in large part because Christians did not see until too late the revolutionary demands in their own faith.

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What's Wrong With Communism?

LET ME begin by making clear what I mean by communism. I do not mean every sort of economic theory and practice which down through the centuries has been associated with that word. Thus I am not discussing any form of religious communism or the various communistic theories advanced before Lenin's time. I am discussing the powerful, organized, international movement originated by Nicolai Lenin, one of the outstanding figures in human history. I am discussing that movement primarily as it has developed under Stalin without going into the merits of the Trotskyist criticism of Stalinism and the Trotskyist contention that it represents true Leninism. I am inclined to think that if Trotsky rather than Stalin had won, the development of communism would have been less different than Stalinists or Trotskyists believe. It was on the issue of civil liberties and fair play that I, along with many others, championed Trotsky against those who condemned him in the famous Moscow purge trial and who finally brought about his assassination.

A further statement is in order. In this brief article, I shall not discuss in any detail what I think would be right and what wrong in communist economic *theory* as opposed, let us say, to democratic socialist theory. I shall barely touch on the interesting question to what degree the evils of which I complain were inherent in Leninism and to what degree they spring from Stalin's perversion of Leninism. For practical purposes, we mean by communism the theory and practice of the Communist International Movement, rigidly controlled from Moscow by the same men who are the dictators of the mighty Soviet Union. If one were to describe this communism in a phrase, it would be in the words of the famous Italian writer and former Communist, Ignazio Silone, "Red Fascism." The principal qualification of this statement would be that, unlike most fascism, official communism is antiracist. It believes in racial equality. That is not only to its credit morally; it is also one source of its strength in the world—even as against Christianity as Christianity is too often practiced. Except in respect to antiracism, Stalin and his associates rather than Mussolini or Hitler pioneered in the totalitarian techniques of government which are most opposed to human dignity and respect for the individual. Fascism in these respects was the imitator. I shall sum up my criticism of communism under these heads:

World Dominion

- (1) Communism is grimly and ruthlessly intent upon absolute world

power. That is what it means by world revolution to which it is devoted with religious zeal. To the pursuit of power, it subordinates every principle. Thus, without abandoning its completely atheistic philosophical position, the Communist party in Italy, in the pursuit of power, voted in a constituent assembly for the official establishment of the Roman Catholic Church by the state. In the United States in 1944, the Communist party declared temporarily in favor of free enterprise and the two-party system—so long, that is, as Roosevelt was appeasing Stalin in respect to his peace program.

(2) In pursuit of world dominion, communism has exalted the political state to heights of absolute power never before reached. Lenin argued that not only the dictatorship but the state itself would wither away once private capitalism was abolished. Private capitalism in the U. S. S. R. has been abolished by Stalin's own contention. But never in history did a police state claim such absolute power over the lives and thoughts of its citizens. The dictatorship seeks to control music, science, literature, and all the arts in the light of its interpretation of the materialist dialectic. The individual exists for the state and has no rights except as they are granted by the state. Communist leaders still profess devotion to "the working class" and to the "Russian nation," both of them abstract conceptions. Toward individual workers or Russians who may be in their way they are ruthless. Communism identifies the interests of the communist rank and file with the interest and program of the dictatorship.

No Civil Liberties

(3) In the service of this god—or devil—the totalitarian state under a communist dictatorship, and in pursuit of victory for the communist cause throughout the world, Lenin himself expressly justified every necessary lie, deceit, or violence. Good faith the Communists proclaim to be a "bourgeois virtue." There are no civil liberties in Russia. There is not even the right to vote "no" on a ballot under Stalin as there was technically in Germany under Hitler. Cruelty and the procedures of the Spanish Inquisition have been reinstated as instruments of government. Stalin holds in forced labor camps millions of prisoners. Some of them are Japanese and German prisoners-of-war. Thousands of them are Poles and Balts and the leading personalities of the five autonomous republics which the dictatorship summarily dissolved. More of them are Russians—political offenders sentenced by the ubiquitous secret police. All of them are slaves in work camps, most of them so badly fed and so cruelly treated that to live six years is something of a miracle. Slavery has become part of the Soviet economy. (See Dallin's *Forced Labor in Soviet Russia*).

(4) The Russian economy is more accurately described as state capi-

talism than any kind of socialism. Inequality of payment has steadily increased and is proclaimed by the dictatorship as a socialist virtue. The workers have no voice through their unions or as citizens in the management of the economy. Extremes of pay between the official and managerial class and the poorer workers or peasants are proportionately as great as in the capitalist United States. In the Russian army, the private gets 10 rubles a month, the lieutenant 1,000, a ratio of 1 to 100, against a corresponding ratio in the American army of 1 to 3. Outside of communist-governed areas, Communists still agitate, often very effectively and courageously, for justice to the worker and measures that could honestly be called socialist. In the U. S. S. R., a police state has simply taken over the functions of a capitalist class and, by a mixture of propaganda and coercion, enforces its will to a degree impossible in capitalist America.

Communism in its historic development illustrates the fruits of a complete *amoralism*. Machiavelli, more truly than Marx, was the communist teacher, and life in the Soviet Union is an immense and tragic commentary on the truth that noble ends cannot be achieved by completely amoral means.

Double-Cross

It may be plausibly argued that Lenin's interpretation of Marx was influenced by Russian thought and Russian history. It cannot truthfully be argued that the denials of liberty in the Soviet Union are exceptional. In their most important features, they will be approximated wherever communism gets power. I can bear personal testimony to the fact that in America I never tried to work (as for many years I often tried) with the Communist party on specific tasks without an effort being made to *discredit or double-cross me*. Nowhere in the world has any non-communist individual or group been able over any long period of time to work with Communists without finally being disposed of by character assassination, imprisonment, or death.

I could document every one of these statements. The amazing fact is that in recent years Communists, their fellow travelers, and their defenders make no real effort to deny these charges. They merely try to divert attention by denouncing the people who make the charges, by minimizing their extent, and by proclaiming and exaggerating some real achievements of the Soviet government in the field of education and other social services. (In modern times, the state needs subjects and slaves who can read and write.) Henry Wallace is one of those who has never answered my private and public appeals to him to give me faith in him and the future by refuting these facts about communism. One of the most depressing experiences in my life was in a pacifist group when

an earnest young pacifist thought to answer my criticism of slavery in the Soviet Union by saying: "Oh, but Mr. X (*a well-known Soviet apologist*) says there are *only* two million slaves." It is serious business when a laudable desire for peace leads men thus to condone slavery on a quantitative basis.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me conclude by saying that I am passionately convinced that *the successful answer to communism cannot be war*. Part of the answer must be the perfecting of our own democracy. Another part, as I have urged in season and out of season, must be an American appeal for disarmament under effective international control. Even if Stalin and the Politburo in the beginning would reject the appeal of the necessary controls, we should have launched a great idea which no dictatorship can keep from the Russian or any other people in the world. But appeasement, as well as preventive war, may lead to destruction. We shall never win true democracy at home or establish peace on sure foundations by denying or condoning the facts which I have presented about communism as communism is illustrated in its holy land, the Soviet Union.

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Communism in China

TO UNDERSTAND the situation in China one has to go back into history, but for present purposes we need not go further back than the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was then that the real transition of China from medieval to modern times began. A Chinese official has well said that China's revolution commenced when Robert Morrison stepped ashore in Canton in 1807. It was not, however, until 1842, eight years after Morrison's death, that China became in any practical way open to the Western world. Then, as a result of the treaty which ended the war of 1839-42 between Britain and China, Hongkong was ceded to the former, and five other ports on the mainland were also opened to foreigners. Furthermore the system of extraterritoriality, under which, for more than a century, foreigners lived in China, was then established. It is thus quite probable that this war and the treaty that followed it were part of what Marx and Engels were thinking about when they wrote this paragraph in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848:

The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian nations into civilization. The cheap prices of its commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls, with which it forces the barbarians' intensely obstinate hatred of foreigners to capitulate. It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e. to become bourgeois themselves. In a word, it creates a world after its own image.

This indictment vividly illustrates, especially on its economic side, the imperialism of which the West has often been so justly accused.

During the seventy years following the publication of the *Manifesto*, the development of communism in Europe and the course of history in China moved in different orbits, but the Russian revolution of 1917-18 brought the two together. Though conditions in the two countries were different, nevertheless there were also similarities which tended to attract them to each other. In both there was need of governmental reform, of a solution of the land problem, and of countering foreign pressure. Also in each country there was a revolutionary party, with a more or less well-defined program for carrying out its objectives. It was natural therefore that eager, forward-looking spirits in each nation should be drawn to those of like mind in the other. Thus it was that during 1919-20 the first links in a new bond between Russia and China were forged. Then in May, 1921, the Chinese Communist party was formally organized at a meeting in Shanghai. Mao Tse-tung, now chairman of the party, was one

of the twelve who attended this first gathering. About the same time another group of Chinese Communists was organized in France. Among its founders was Chou En-lai, still a prominent figure in communist councils, and the man to whom was entrusted the 1946-47 negotiations with the Nanking government and with General Marshall. Other groups were also organized later in Germany, Russia, and Japan.

Sun Yat-sen

The story of the Communist party from this time (1921) to the end of 1927 must now be told, as it is the key to an understanding of all that has happened since. When the Manchu Dynasty abdicated and the new republic was established in 1912, it did not, as every one knows, fulfill the hopes of its founders. Instead the country quickly fell apart and different military leaders set up for themselves in the various areas and China entered upon what has come to be called the era of the war-lords. Seeing the trend of events, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who more than any one else was responsible for the overthrow of the Manchus, set himself to work once again for the reform and modernization of his country. To this end national unity was indispensable, but to effect this Dr. Sun's resources were inadequate. He therefore sought help from various foreign countries including England, the United States, and Russia. It was from the last only that he succeeded in securing aid. What he received was not a great deal, but it was worthwhile. There was some money and—what was of much more value—the help of Borodin, Galens, and other advisers. These men by their knowledge both of political and military strategy and their mastery of propaganda techniques rendered good service to Dr. Sun's cause.

This liaison with the Russians took place in 1923, and in that same year the third "Congress" of the Communist party (there had been a second in 1922) was held in Canton. At that time it was decided to cooperate with the Kuomintang, Dr. Sun's party, and form a united front against the northern militarists. In January, 1924, at the first "National Congress" of the Kuomintang, also held in Canton, this union was consummated. At once the effect of the new blood, both Chinese Communist and Russian, was felt. The organization of the workers and peasants and the training of an army for the northern expedition proceeded apace.

As long as Dr. Sun lived, the two parties got on fairly well together, but with his death in 1925 the union became more and more uneasy. Still it held sufficiently well for the "northern expedition" to be launched in the autumn of 1926. With surprising speed the southern armies pushed northward, and by the spring of 1927 virtually all China south of the Yangtze was in their hands. But at this juncture a split between the right

and left wings of the Kuomintang occurred. Personal jealousies, the excesses of the left wing, and a too dictatorial attitude on the part of Russia, all entered into the cleavage. The end result was the triumph of Chiang Kai-shek and the right wing of the Kuomintang, and the purging of the Communists. With this development the position of the Russians also became untenable, and by the end of 1927 their active influence in the revolution had ceased for the time being. Indeed six years were to pass before relations between China and Russia were officially resumed, and then with the Nanking government, not with the Communists.

Antireligious

In connection with the northern advance just spoken of, it should be said that the attitude of the revolutionists at that time was both anti-foreign and antireligious. "Down with imperialism!" was one of the slogans of the hour; and religion was frowned upon, partly because it was regarded as superstition merely and partly because, in its Christian form, it was associated with those who were dubbed "imperialists." The result was what might have been expected. There was much abuse, and some destruction of foreign property, and even loss of life as well. The danger of large-scale foreign intervention in China, arising from this attack on foreigners, was also one of the causes which led to the break between the Kuomintang and the Communists. On the whole, however, the attitude taken by foreign governments towards China at this time (1926-27) was commendable for its restraint.

The rest of the story of the Chinese Communists must now be briefly summarized. After the break with the Kuomintang the leaders who escaped established themselves in Kiangsi and adjacent provinces, and there built up again their scattered forces. For seven years the struggle went on between them and the Nanking government under General Chiang. Finally, however, such was the pressure brought against them that the Communists felt it wise to shift their base to another part of the country. Thus began in October, 1934, the famous "Long March" to the northwest. This journey, marked by much fighting along the way, took a year to make and covered about 5,000 miles. It was indeed a military achievement of a high order. The wisdom of this move is now clearly evident. In their new location in Shensi Province, the Communists had a base from which they could easily extend their power in north China. Even so, time was short, for within less than two years war came with Japan.

Nanking Weakens

During the war, there was again for about two years (1937-39) a com-

mon front between Nanking and the Communists; but gradually mutual suspicions grew into armed clashes, and at the end of the war there developed a fresh struggle for power, in which each side jockeyed for the best positions both politically and militarily. Still the fiction of national unity was maintained, and even up until March of last year the Communists still had representatives in Nanking and Shanghai. Finally, however, even that slender thread was snapped, and for a year now there has been open civil war. The course of the conflict has gone against the Nanking regime, and the Communists are stronger today than ever before. They now control, except for the larger cities, the greater part of north China. Their regular army is estimated at more than a million and a half, and their party membership is one of the three largest in the world. What now is the significance of this rise to power which we have traced, and what is its challenge to the Christian Church today?

The answer to this question becomes clear as soon as it is realized that, at least so far as the Communists are concerned, the old patterns of 1923-27 still persist. Marxism and the class struggle is still the philosophy of the movement. Russia is its great inspiration. It is probable that actual Russian aid is not large now, just as it was not earlier, but Russia's contribution in the realm of example, if not also of advice, is still to be reckoned with. Again, there is the question of imperialism. Whereas in the previous struggle Britain was regarded as the chief offender, now it is the United States, for its aid given to the Nanking government. Christianity is also still regarded as superstition. It may be tolerated, for whatever of practical good it renders, but in itself it is of no worth. Moreover, missionaries are tainted with imperialism, and Chinese Christians bear their reproach. Furthermore, neither the Church—nor any other group for that matter—can criticize or oppose the authorities and survive; for civil liberty does not exist in communist territory today any more than it does in Soviet Russia. Finally, the class struggle is not mere agrarian or industrial reform, it is essentially war; war which its proponents justify by the ends sought, but still war; and in war the opposition is relentlessly overcome and done away with.

Good and Bad

To write the above is *not meant to imply that the Communists work only evil and the Nationalists only good*. That is not the case, there is good and bad in both regimes, as there is in any human situation; nevertheless what is written does state the problem that actually confronts Christian missions in communist areas today. As has been indicated, the patterns are the same now as they were in the earlier period, and they are producing the same results. Most missionaries in communist territory

have been compelled to leave their posts. Not merely would their own lives be in danger if they stayed, but their presence would also endanger their Chinese colleagues. A few missionaries have found it possible to remain in some places or to go in and out under certain conditions, but none are sure how long these arrangements will continue. In the meantime they bravely run the ever-present risks. In many places it has been found impossible for Christian work to be carried on *even under purely Chinese leadership*. Property used for Christian purposes has frequently been confiscated, and there are cases on record where Chinese Christians have even been called upon to lay down their lives because of their connection with the cause. The outlook is not wholly dark, here and there are relatively bright spots, for as always in such circumstances much depends on the local officials. But, speaking generally, the situation is grave and will become increasingly so, if communism spreads further. *Yet it is just in times like these that the church's roots go deepest.*

W. PLUMER MILLS, D.D.

Missionary in China since 1912; Rhodes scholar at Oxford; evangelistic work, Presbyterian Mission, Nanking; outstanding figure in relief work in China following Japanese invasion of 1937.

The Czech Road to Communism

Via Munich and Moscow

DURING World War I, I was closely associated with the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia and Siberia. This heroic group had much to do with the winning of independence for Czechoslovakia, for they dramatized the diplomatic work which had been carried on in allied capitals by Thomas G. Masaryk and Eduard Benes.

It will be remembered that the Czechoslovak Legion battled the Red Army up and down the length of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and succeeded in wresting control of all of Siberia and a good part of Russia from the Communists until their own exit from the country was assured. The 50,000 men who made up the Czechoslovak Legion knew communism at firsthand. They had seen it seize the power in Russia and they had seen the effects of that seizure of power. While the Czechs had always been "leftist" in their thinking, only a few of the legionnaires embraced communism. The rest thoroughly detested both its goals and its methods. Accordingly, they entered into battle against the Reds with enthusiasm. In this antipathy to bolshevism the legionnaires reflected truly the thinking of the people at home. For at that time the Czechs were first of all nationalists, and all political and economic programs were subordinated to the desire to become masters in their own country and to demonstrate their ability to govern themselves in accordance with democratic principles. Now in 1948 Czechoslovakia is a communist country with all power firmly in the hands of the one party.

Why This Change?

How can one explain this radical political reorientation of the Czech people? How has it come to pass that the violent anti-Bolsheviks of 1918 have become the apparently ardent Communists of 1948?

The answer is not to be found in the principles of "the founding fathers." Thomas G. Masaryk knew Russia and he knew communism and he had this to say of it:

Communism is centralistic and very rigid. It is an abstract system deduced from a thesis and applied by force. It is dictatorship infallible and inquisitorial. Without freedom democracy is impossible.

Benes, as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1924, expressed his conviction that only class hatred, terrorism, and confusion would result either from a bolshevist or a reactionary political regime in Czechoslovakia. That

Benes sought to have the Soviet government resume normal relations with the rest of Europe was a course adopted despite communism rather than because of it.

The Communist party played but a very minor role in the first republic. The Czechoslovak Republic became the best example of democracy to be found in all of Europe. True, it was socialistic, but freedom was as real as it ever has been in the United States. From the perspective of today, it may even be said that the Czechoslovak government gave too much freedom to its citizens, for it gave to the Sudeten Germans ample opportunity to agitate against the government and to work out their unholy alliance with Hitler. The orientation of the Czechoslovak Republic through these relatively peaceful years was definitely Western. Politically, culturally, and economically, close ties were wrought out with Western Europe, Great Britain, and America.

The year 1938 marks the great turning point in recent Czechoslovak history. *That was the date of Munich*, a name which will live in infamy in the minds of all freedom-loving Czechs and Slovaks. It is not necessary to review what happened at Munich. The Western powers sold out Czechoslovakia to Hitler thinking that they would thereby guarantee "peace in our time." The disillusionment, despair, and anger engendered in the Czech and Slovak people at that time cannot possibly be imagined by any one who does not know the temper and spirit of the people. They have never forgotten it and it has been determining in all that has happened ever since.

Humiliation

Came the Nazi occupation during which the country was one large concentration camp. The Communists and legionnaires, and any others who gave promise of ever becoming political or cultural leaders, were imprisoned and executed by the thousands. However, there was still the hope that when the Allies won the Czechoslovak Republic could be reconstituted and the people could begin living where they had left off in 1938.

The Allies did win. However, remembering the result of previous alliances with the Western powers, President Benes this time turned to Russia for alliance. The Russian army had a large part in the liberation of the country. The Czech Communists emerged from the occupation, despite their persecution and because of it, much more powerful than before. However, they did not win a majority of the electorate at the first elections—only thirty-eight per cent. Stalin guaranteed Benes freedom from interference in internal affairs.

However, the Communists did secure from Benes an agreement that

in the new coalition government the key positions in the cabinet should be given to Communists. Thus the positions of Prime Minister, the Minister of the Interior (controlling the police), the Minister of Information (controlling the press and the radio), the Minister of National Defence (controlling the army) fell to Communists. This proved to be a fatal mistake. Benes and Jan Masaryk launched their new republic in the hope that they could keep their country actually free, the while on international questions they were to follow the Russian line. But the Communists became the one strong, self-disciplined party in the country. They knew what they wanted and they knew the methods which would enable them to reach their goal. The anti-Communists were divided and had no support from the West comparable to that given to the Communists by Russia.

Fear of Germany

The Russian orientation of the Czechoslovak people in the last few years has not been due to their Slavic kinship nor has it been due primarily to a wholesale conversion to communism. The predominating psychological factor has been the *fear of a revived and rearmed Germany*, which would not be controlled by Western powers and might even be used by them as an instrument of waging another war on the East. The unfavorable action to the Marshall Plan was due, not only to pressure from Moscow, but from the fear that western Germany would be included in it, and rearmed, would wreak its vengeance upon the Czechs.

Now the Communists have seized power. One has the impression from reading newspapers here that some one in Moscow pushed a button and everything else followed from that. That is an oversimplification of the case. There was a button pushed at Munich, and since the conclusion of World War II there have been a whole array of buttons available to the Western powers, the pressing of which would have given to the Czechoslovaks the impression that the Western powers were interested in them and disposed to stand by them. But the Western powers did nothing. What has happened in Czechoslovakia is sheer tragedy! Those of us who love the country and its people see crumbling to the ground, one by one, all of the proud embodiments of human freedom which the Czechs and Slovaks have erected for themselves.

A correspondent from Prague writes that there are three kinds of people there: *First*, those who are in utter despair; *second*, those who are unrealistically optimistic, repeating such phrases as, "The truth will prevail" without any real conception of what communism does to the truth; and *third*, those who are giving themselves wholeheartedly to the new regime, believing that it is the "wave of the future."

This correspondent further states that half of the people would leave the country if they could.

As we view the wreckage of this freedom, let us not put it down as simply another manifestation of the communist expansionist program. It is that. But it is also *the outcome of the failure of the West, including America, to stand by a freedom-loving people.*

The Czechs have arrived at communism via Moscow *but the starting point was Munich.*

KENNETH D. MILLER, D.D.

President, New York City Mission Society; visited Czechoslovakia again last year; speaks the language easily and knows the people well.

Two Forms of Tyranny

IT is deeply ironic that our modern culture, which dreamed of the gradual elimination of "methods of force" in favor of "methods of mind" and of the progressive triumph of democratic government over all forms of tyranny, should encounter two forms of tyranny in one generation. It is baffling, as well as ironic, that the two forms of tyranny, nazism and communism, should be so similar in practice and yet so dissimilar in theory. Unless we understand how such contradictory theories of man's moral and political problem can issue in practically identical political institutions and moral behavior, we will not fully comprehend the breadth and depth of our contemporary crisis.

Nazism was the fruit of moral cynicism. Communism is the product of moral and political utopianism. Nazism believed (or believes) that a nation has the right to declare that there are no standards of justice beyond its own interest. Communism dreams of a universal society in which all nations will be related to each other in a frictionless harmony, if indeed nations will not disappear entirely in a universal brotherhood. Nazism raises the self-worship, to which all ethnic groups are prone, to explicit proportions in its theory of a "master race." Communism believes that ethnic distinctions are irrelevant in an ideal society.

Nazism regards power as the final justification of any action. According to its theory a nation which has the power to organize an imperial society beyond its own borders proves its right to do so by its success. Communism dreams of an ideal society in which the state "will wither away" and in which every form of coercion, force, and power will gradually become irrelevant. It thinks that political power is merely an instrument of the property-owning classes, who require it to guarantee their special privileges. It is therefore certain that the abolition of the institution of property will create the possibility of a kind of millennial anarchy in which men will live in uncoerced harmony with one another. Nazism believes in an elite class which manages the affairs of the mass of men. Communism is fiercely equalitarian in theory and hopes for the abolition of all class distinctions. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" is, in theory, provisional. For the dictatorship of a small oligarchy, which has in fact established itself in the communist state, there is no place at all in communist theory.

The contrast in theory between the two systems is practically complete. The question is how practically identical political institutions can develop from these contradictory theories. The question must be answered

primarily by examining communist theory more closely; for Nazi theory and practice are consistent. The practice follows by logical necessity from the theory. Communism boasts that it has created a new unity of theory and practice. Yet it presents the modern world with the most shocking disparity between the two. The contrast is in fact so shocking that millions of confused idealists, even in the Western world, solve the problem by refusing to believe the obvious facts. It must be admitted however that this procedure becomes more and more difficult as the contrast between the generous and utopian dreams, which originally animated Marxism, and the tortuous politics of a Russian state become more and more obvious.

The evils of nazism took us unawares because modern culture did not realize that the most refined standards of universal justice cannot finally protect a community, whether international or national, against the possibility of a pure and explicit defiance of moral law. Our everyday experience with moral cynics, who acknowledge no law beyond their own interest, should have prepared us for the possible embodiment of moral cynicism in the life of a nation. But our modern culture was too confident of the innate goodness of man to entertain such expectations. In consequence we were overwhelmed by the appearance of nazism on the stage of our history. We sought to comprehend it as a "reversion to barbarism." This explanation fails to take into account that human beings have the freedom to defy the laws of their existence. They can act as consistent egotists even though the higher law of human existence demands that we give each other mutual support. Naturally the increase of human power and freedom in civilized society increases rather than diminishes the possibility of such egoistic defiance. There is therefore no guarantee against the recrudescence of nazism in the development from barbarism to civilization. A high degree of civilization makes human cooperation on a wider and wider scale necessary; but it also makes defiance of the law of mutual support more and more possible. If a defiantly egoistic member of the human community can secure the technical instruments for the attainment of his particular ends, he can, as in the recent nazi case, come close to placing the whole community of mankind under his dominion.

We do not understand communism if we fail to realize that it is a variant of the same utopianism with which the whole liberal world is infected. Communist tyranny, in other words, grows out of habits of thought which rendered our generation incapable of anticipating or understanding nazi tyranny. Communism turns the soft utopianism of modern culture into a hard and truculent utopianism. The difference between a soft and hard utopianism is that the former dreams of achieving

an ideal society of uncoerced justice through the historical development of altruistic as against egoistic purposes; while the latter claims to embody a social system in which this miracle has actually taken place. A soft utopianism projects its ideal of a perfect accord between men and nations into the future. It is therefore free of the fanaticism and truculence of the hard utopian who claims to possess the ideal society and therefore also the right to deal ruthlessly with all enemies and opponents of his ideal.

The root of communist utopianism lies in the Marxist analysis of the cause of human egoism. According to Marx the original idyllic social character of man was destroyed by the rise of the institution of private property. This social and economic institution plays the role of the devil in communist mythology. If it should be true that a particular economic institution is the cause of all human egotism, it would follow of course that the elimination of that institution would make men completely social and would abolish all frictions and competitions in human society. Hence the vision of a classless society in which every one "will give according to his ability and take according to his need" follows logically from the Marxist diagnosis of the root of human egotism. If it should be true that the state is merely an instrument for preserving the privileges of the propertied classes, it would also follow logically that a propertyless society would have no use for the coercive functions of the state. It would wither away. If it should be true that this desirable end cannot be achieved without a world-wide revolution of the propertyless classes against the property owners, the idyllic paradise to be attained would seem to justify the ruthless policies pursued in the conflict. It would seem also to justify a provisional dictatorship which will give cohesion and striking power to the cohorts of redemption. If this provisional dictatorship seems to have inordinate power, the utopian need not worry overmuch about the perils of such power, since, according to his theory, all political power will atrophy in the day when a complete victory has been won. It may be questioned whether the Russian oligarchy, which now controls the destinies of a nation committed to the achievement of such an ideal never-never-land, is animated by these utopian dreams. The possession of power is sweet and the corruptions of power are great. We may assume therefore that those who exercise this power do not concern themselves too much with the dreams which originally endowed their power with moral legitimacy. But it is important to recognize that in the eyes of the faithful the power which this oligarchy exercises is still in a completely different category than the power of nazi oligarchs. Furthermore the capacity of the human soul for self-deception is so great that some of these Russian oligarchs may, for all we know, feel themselves

completely justified by the original dream.

But speculation about the mixture of motives in the soul of the oligarch is comparatively irrelevant. The important point is that communism, as we know it, is a political system in which a provisional moral cynicism, which countenances the defiance of the moral experience of the human race, is justified by a moral utopianism which dreams of the achievement of an ideal world in which property, government, nationality, and ethnic distinctions will all disappear. Since the communist hope is an illusion, the objective observer must recognize the provisional cynicism as no different than the basic cynicism of the Nazi even as he knows that a supposedly provisional dictatorship follows the same practices as one which claimed permanent tenure.

While it is important to recognize that diametrically opposite conceptions of human nature may thus produce common unscrupulous and ruthless political practices and despotic political institutions, it is nevertheless important to bear the differences in basic theory in mind. One reason for doing this is that the corruption of an ideal dream may be politically more dangerous than a frankly cynical political program. The Nazis were, for instance, frustrated in their ambition to rule a continent and a world by their senseless self-worship. It is ridiculous to ask a subject people to violate their sense of self-respect by holding the conqueror in religious veneration. The Russian will-to-power is more subtly related to the communist cause. Russia comes to every nation, which it intends to subjugate, as a "liberator" from "fascist" and "imperialist" oppression. Russian nationalism is related to the communist dream as Napoleon's French nationalism was related to the liberal dream of the eighteenth century. The difference between the nationalism of the Nazis and the nationalism of the Russian Communists is the difference between the "honest" moral cynic and the misguided or self-deceived idealist who fails to recognize to what degree self-interest corrupts even the most ideal motives. The Russians are fortunately technically weaker than the Nazis. Otherwise we would long since have discovered that a corrupted ideal may be more potent than a frank defiance of all ideal values. The proof of that higher potency is given by the fact that Russia's so-called "fifth columns" in the Western world are composed not of the miserable traitors who constituted the nazi-dominated "Bund" nor yet of mere communist party hacks. They contain thousands of misguided idealists who still think that Russia is the midwife of an ideal society, about to be born.

But there is an even more important reason for noting the difference between the utopian and the cynical bases of these two forms of tyranny. It will not do to fight a despotism, which had its inspiration in utopianism, merely by calling attention to crass corruption of the original ideal.

It is necessary for a democratic civilization to recognize the weakness in its own life which gave power and plausibility to this dream. The basic error from which all subsequent Marxist illusions spring is the belief that the institution of property is the root-source of all antisocial tendencies in human nature. This is merely another version of many liberal interpretations of human nature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which attributed human evil primarily to faulty political institutions. All purely social and institutional interpretations of human evil are obviously wrong. Man's capacity and willingness to seek his own ends at the expense of the commonweal may gain institutional instruments but cannot be explained by them. As a matter of fact the primary purpose of the institutions of both property and government is to prevent men from taking advantage of each other.

But it ought to be obvious that the power of both property and government can become the source of injustice, even though its primary purpose is the preservation of justice. All forms of inordinate power are in fact a peril to justice and community; for excess of power tempts its possessor to use it, not for security of the self but for the aggrandizement of the self against others. It is important therefore that a technical civilization such as ours, which elaborates ever more complex forms of power in the realm of both economics and politics, maintain a pragmatic attitude toward the problem of power in both realms. Actually our liberal or democratic culture, which arose in the eighteenth century, maintained a critical attitude toward political power, regarding it as the potential source of injustice; but it became increasingly uncritical toward economic power, assuming it to be the source of justice. Thus property rights were made more absolute in an industrial and commercial society than they were in the older agrarian society despite the fact that a technical civilization created new perils of economic power which did not exist in an agrarian civilization. It was this error which invited, in a sense, the countererror of Marxism. Thus a religious veneration of the institution of property led to a new religion which sought the redemption of mankind through the abolition of property. Since Marxism erroneously assumed that economic power inhered altogether in the ownership of property, failing to recognize that the power of the manager of economic process would persist even in a society devoid of private property, its policy of socialization merely resulted in turning both economic and political power over to a single oligarchy, thus increasing the danger of tyranny. This error, added to all of its other miscalculations of human nature and history, accentuated its drift toward despotism.

But these gross miscalculations of Marxism must not obscure the errors of a liberal society which gave plausibility and credibility to Marxist

illusions. It is particularly important for Americans to be humble about these errors; for the illusions of a liberal society persist in a more naive form in our own nation than in any other modern industrial country. We are thus constantly tempted to give the highly implausible Marxist creed a new plausibility by our own naive dogmatism. Perhaps the final irony of history in our contemporary situation lies in the fact that America's power should have made us the prime bulwark against communist aggression upon democracy. For we mix our devotion to democracy with illusions about the relation of the economic process to the cause of justice, which could only have arisen and persisted in a nation as favored as ours and therefore as comparatively free from the desperate problems of justice which an impoverished European society faces. As far as Europe is concerned, we are not an ideal St. George to kill the communist dragon. We merely call attention to the fact that the dragon has teeth and jaws, very similar to those of a horrible beast we recently laid low. The teeth and jaws are in fact very similar. But the dragon was originally himself a St. George, contending against evil; and part of his power is derived, not from his teeth of tyranny but from the original St. Georgian aura, with which he is invested.

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The Christian Answer to Communism

TWO WARS in one generation have profoundly altered the world situation in which the Christian movement must operate. In Europe and Asia fascist attempts to dominate neighborhood or world have been defeated with ruinous results for Germany, Italy, and Japan. Eastern Europe has virtually disappeared behind "the iron curtain." Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg and, to a lesser extent, the Scandinavian countries have suffered grievous losses in property and manpower, not only by destruction and death in Europe but by the loss of overseas possessions with their resources and sources of income, visible and invisible. Africa and Latin America have been artificially stimulated with resultant new demands for a fuller share in the world's economy. India, Ceylon, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia enter new opportunities for freedom and self-development but with the serious handicaps of a feudal agrarian economy and undeveloped industry in each case. China and Korea, freed from Japanese aggression, are involved in division or civil war. The British Commonwealth remains strong but scattered. Soviet Russia and the United States emerge as the two giants of our time, the former weakened but aggressive, the latter stronger than ever but unaccustomed to its new rôle in the world and thus far unable to reconcile foreign policy and domestic politics. Hence the dubious attempt to secure Jewish votes and Arab oil and the tendency to back reactionary regimes in Germany and China through fear of socialism in Europe or communism in Asia, forgetting that China cannot afford the incubus of feudal landlordism or Europe the luxury of free enterprise.

In this situation with its confusion, misery, and hopelessness Russian communism finds a fertile field for its aggrandizement, seeking by propaganda and aggression, direct and indirect, to dominate where it can and to paralyze or destroy where it cannot dominate. In political terms this situation can only be met by a combination of economic aid to resistance governments in Europe and Asia, the maintenance of adequate military force *and* the adoption of progressive politico-economic policies to win the cooperation of freedom-loving people everywhere.

What is the rôle of the Christian movement in general and of Christian missions in particular in this revolutionary situation? By what methods can Christianity contribute in keeping with its own nature and spirit?

First of all, we must remember that there are Christians on both sides of the ideological conflict of our time. There are Christians who are capitalist and those who are socialist in their thinking, Christians who

are avowed supporters of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and in Soviet Russia. This calls for clarity and emphasis on the basic Christian teaching of fundamental respect for human personality not to be coerced or dragooned in the interest of any ideology, political or economic system whatever.

At the same time the actual needs of people, the acute poverty and attendant ills of over half the population of the world, must not be glossed over. The real needs of people must be met, physical and spiritual needs, whatever the cost in sharing and self-sacrifice on our part.

This does not involve any lessening of the importance of Christian teaching but its application to the pressing problems of livelihood, health, education, fellowship in community, and communion with God. Christian missions have always worked at these problems; the situation today calls for a great increase of effort and the utilization of new techniques to accelerate and to extend the process of evangelism.

St. Paul claimed that his Christian ministry in Corinth, that byword of Greek culture, had been in "demonstration of the Spirit and power." What Europe, Asia, North and South America, Africa, and the Pacific Islands need today is demonstrations of the spirit and power of the Gospel to change individuals, communities, political and economic processes, social living beyond present recognition.

By means of letters carried by hand, St. Paul managed to shepherd his converts and to reach still others who heard his letters read. Having demonstrated the Gospel in concrete situations, we must broadcast by literature, picture, and radio the facts of changed lives and communities, thereby penetrating behind all the "iron curtains" which totalitarian systems can erect about themselves, their satellites, converts, or inquirers.

In face of prevalent secularism—whether mild humanitarianism or violent communism—the final answer is Christianity—authentic, dynamic, applied Christianity. Let us proclaim and demonstrate it as never before. The Advance Program provides the opportunity to do this.

L. S. ALBRIGHT, D.D.

Executive Secretary, Committee to Study a Christian Approach to Communism.

The Comprehensive Ministry to Community Needs

A Practical Christian Answer to Communism

WE NEED an interpretation of the Christian evangel which is broad enough to meet the basic human needs to which communism ministers.

However, rather than to single out communism as the enemy or rival of Christianity, let us look into the background of history for the sources of the unrest of modern society which are responsible not only for the appearance of communism but also of other world-wide movements which are beginning to raise the level of humanity like an irresistible ocean tide.

Among these sources of world unrest with which the Christian Church must reckon are the inheritance of *feudalism*, with its system of land tenure and serfdom; *capitalism*, with the pressure of surplus money for profitable investment through the exploitation of the material and human resources of backward areas; *imperialism*, not only political but economic and cultural; *racialism*, with its color bar and denial of basic human rights.

The mounting pressure of population upon the land, with its resulting land hunger, undernourishment, and disease; the cry for a better life and opportunity; the increasing struggle for survival; the demand for self-determination; the revolt against the color bar and denial of equality of human rights; the disillusionment of the masses with the present order of society and their craving for a way of escape from the hopelessness of their lives: these things have given communism an unparalleled opportunity which it has capitalized to the utmost as it spreads in land after land of the underprivileged. Communism has risen like a meteor flashing across the heavens, for it offers the world's underprivileged masses a great and *immediate hope* of freedom from their bonds and the betterment of their estates. The world situation offers an equally priceless opportunity to Christianity as it works for the redemption of a lost and suffering world.

An interpretation of Christianity and a program broad enough to direct the activities of the Church into channels which will meet the unrest of the underprivileged and will offer a way of escape from their disabilities must be discovered and integrated with the Advance Program.

In its negation of God, communism denies the existence of spiritual values and the need of moral and personal redemption. It equates redemption with physical welfare, land, food and with the identification of man's interests with the totalitarian state and the communal society. It conceives of change and progress as coming from *without* and the right of the person as subservient to those of the community.

Christianity, on the other hand, historically has insisted upon the change of men and society from *within*, the inherent worth and dignity of the person as a potential son of God and the slow processes of moral and spiritual redemption of mankind as a necessary foundation for social and material progress.

In the face of their conflicting ideologies, philosophies, and methods is there any common ground on which these two contrasted systems meet? We believe that a measure of common ground exists in the area of ministry to many of the basic human needs of society.

Christianity's concern is with *all of life* and with every condition of the individual and of society which either restricts or supports the possibility of man's reaching the fullness of the stature of Christ and of realizing His concept of the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ's redemption of humanity must deal with all aspects of personal and community need or it cannot save a lost world. This conviction is based upon the teachings and example of Christ Himself.

This concept of the unity of all of life and its need of redemption has been growing in the foreign missionary strategy and program of the Church. As Arthur Mosher has said:

When we departmentalize any program so that part of it pursues economic, social, intellectual and political goals in a secular manner, while another part attempts to supplement this by religious teaching, the result is an inner conflict in the program. A secular approach and a religious attitude are incompatible. Since extending the Kingdom involves the extension of religious attitudes, our program must, throughout, use a religious approach to all problems. So rather than trying to Christianize a secular rural development program, let us see to what Christian rural program the Gospel itself commits us.¹

Here in a nutshell is the philosophy of the comprehensive parish program, a pattern of missionary work which is remarkably adapted to the evangelization of underprivileged peoples.

A practical concern for health, diet, sanitation, agricultural improvement, land tenure, home and family life, housing, education, literature, recreation, cottage industries, cooperatives, worship, evangelism, Chris-

¹ "The Kingdom of God and Rural Reconstruction," Christian Rural Fellowship Bulletin No. 56, November, 1940, Room 1020, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

tian stewardship and preaching are all inseparable parts of the Christian evangel. But these things must be conceived of as indivisible elements of the Gospel and must be *integrated* in the program of the Church. The Christian rural service and training centers recommended in the Program of Rural Rehabilitation for Asia, submitted by John Reisner, offer a pattern by which the job can be done.

There are a few magnificent examples of this Christian comprehensive approach to the needs of the community in several of the mission fields of the world, namely at Martandam, India; Hopei, China; Kambini, Portuguese East Africa; Guatajata, Bolivia; Encrucijada, Cuba; Pyinmana, Burma; and Harima, Japan.

These demonstrations of the unitary program of the Church could be widely duplicated under conditions of a properly-trained missionary and national leadership. The preparation of such leadership, both missionary and national, by the theological seminaries and Bible institutes of the mission sending and receiving lands, through supplementary courses of training, should have a very high priority in the advance missionary program of the new era.

III

This interpretation of Christianity in the comprehensive parish program is a powerful and also a constructive answer to communism, but it is handicapped at two vital points by the very nature of Christianity and its ministry to the human needs of society.

First, as already indicated, is the *time element* in the transformation of man and his community. The program of Christianity requires *time* for bearing fruit, both in the spiritual and material spheres. As contrasted with communism, Christianity requires an inner moral and social discipline and regeneration. The basic changes which it effects are not through political and economic revolution, but through an inner revolution, a transformation of the spirit which leads to personal, social, and economic regeneration. The process demands struggle with both inner and outer adverse conditions. It partakes of the Creator's cosmic laws of growth; it requires the preparation of the soil, and the planting and nurture of the seed in both the heart of man and in his environment. Given these necessary conditions, the unitary approach of Christianity will meet communism upon its own ground and provide it with an answer which will ultimately prevail.

The *second* handicap of the Christian approach to the problem is *the*

weakness of the missionary program of the Church before the vastness of the task which faces it. The activities of the foreign missionary movement are as a drop in the bucket for meeting the immediate colossal human needs, compounded of political, social, economic, and spiritual forces, which are shaking mankind. There are *four factors* which underlie this weakness:

1. The ever-increasing ratio of population growth to the available land and the food supply among the non-Christian peoples. Each year the net increase of India's population, six million, is as great as the entire Protestant Christian population in that sub-continent.

2. The desperate economic weakness of the Christian forces in the lands of the Younger Churches and their difficulty financially to support the great and complicated Christian movement which the Western churches have built up in their midst during the last century. The problem centers not only in the inability of the Christian community to overtake by aggressive evangelism the mounting non-Christian populations, in which they are a small minority, but it is an immediate question of their ability even to hold the ground they now occupy and to support the overhead structure on which they are dependent for growth and stability.

3. The inadequacy of the present concept of its task and of the program of the missionary movement for the redemption of the rural seventy to ninety per cent of the non-Christian peoples of the world. We do not minimize the significance of the rapid growth of the urban centers, but we cannot get away from the fact, with all its somber implications, that the rural areas are those in which the pressure of population increase is the greatest and that it is here that the struggle for bare survival is most acute. This pressure and struggle will be greatly accentuated in the next fifty years. Sound missionary strategy demands a focusing of its plans for expansion and the adaptation of its institutional and church work upon this rural battleground of the Christian movement. The Advance Program demands a new concentration of effort, of greatly enlarged funds and, above all, an allocation of workers specially trained for rural service, both nationals and missionaries, beyond anything that the missionary movement has yet visualized or attempted.

4. The fourth weakness of the missionary movement for making a *quantitative* impression upon the needs of the non-Christian societies is the lack of adequate funds. Even with a tenfold increase of the present staffs and budgets allocated to rural missions, the demands of the hour are upon such a colossal scale as to place the task far beyond the resources of the Western churches. For example, it is doubtful whether the expenditure of anything less than \$100,000,000 in experimental stations, irrigation projects, flood prevention, soil erosion, social services, and the training of adequate staff in agricultural extension work would make an appreciable impact upon raising the level of living of more than a very few of China's provinces or of India's rural districts.

The *quantitative* task of rural reconstruction is beyond the power of foreign missions as they are at present conceived, supported, and administered. It calls for the financial backing of a great nation or of the United Nations upon such a scale as has been evoked by the trail of devastation following World War II. Recent editorials in both the

*New York Herald Tribune*² and *The New York Times* have ably argued the allocation of \$100,000,000 to \$160,000,000 of the China Recovery Program fund to the promotion of the kind of rural rehabilitation which has been followed with marked success by Dr. Y. C. James Yen of the Ting Hsien Experiment Station of the Mass Education Center at Hopei, North China. Here is a pattern of mass education, health, economic betterment, agricultural improvement, and cottage industries which for two decades under Chinese-trained leadership has proved its power to create a literate and rehabilitated rural population. The expenditure of funds for such constructive purposes is urged in contrast to the provision of arms and munitions for stemming the advance of communism in China. These editorials have been supported by the open letters of Dr. James Shotwell and other international experts who have a knowledge of the current situation in China. We suggest that such a course as advocated should receive the organized support of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. Such backing addressed to the appropriate authorities in Washington, representing the combined experience and interests of the churches of North America, if properly and promptly presented, might turn the scale in the allocation of a substantial fund for the rural rehabilitation of China.

Adequate and early action on a nation-wide scale could conceivably stem the communist advance among China's rural millions in a degree which would be quite out of the question for the missionary movement to accomplish in the decades immediately before us.

However, such governmental action would in no wise free the missionary boards from the responsibility of taking a great forward step of their own in pointing the way in this same field. The task of the Church for rural rehabilitation is a *qualitative* not a *quantitative* task. This has been demonstrated on many mission fields by the pioneering work of the Church in medicine, education, literature, agriculture, and in various fields of social service. Examples of high quality have been established which have been used as standards in the advance programs of governments.

The Christian movement has many examples of such qualitative service within its own ranks. One of them is the agricultural and rural extension work founded by Nanking University at Wukiang, thirty miles west of Nanking. The center is led by a trained Chinese staff, is self-supporting, and after being started and sponsored by a Christian institution has been taken under government auspices as a model reconstruction center for a large rural district.

² *New York Herald Tribune*, March 12, 1948 editorial, "A Program for China."

The Wukiang Rural Extension Center is an example of the type of approach to the total needs of the community which, with modifications based on local conditions, could be widely duplicated in the mission fields of the world:

Long before the war Wukiang was well-known for the extensiveness of its program for rural reconstruction and the ability to maintain itself, in due time, through local support under the supervision of the University of Nanking.

The center began first with the distribution of improved cotton seed in the spring of 1922. Then it gradually took on other activities such as education, cooperatives, and public health to meet pressing needs of the community. In 1930 the National Agricultural Extension Committee of the National Government began to help finance the work, with a view to making the center a place for demonstration for rural reconstruction.

The center was equipped with a seed farm of twenty acres, a cotton-gin house, a clinic service, a library, an elementary school, and a headquarters with fifty rooms for offices, dormitories, conferences, and seed storage. There were a total of nine people on the staff, including five agricultural extension workers, two school teachers, and two nurses, and twenty apprentices selected from the community for training. In winter seasons many short-term training courses ranging from four to six weeks were conducted for farmers and their wives. Toward the end of their training, they were often taken to Nanking to visit the university and government offices. Up to 1937, the college had organized four district Nung Hwei (farmers' associations) with a total of 2,000 members and these four Nung Hwei were united to form a federation for the entire community, an area with a radius of eight miles. It is to this federation that the college has gradually shifted the management of the center. Under the federation, there were organized two credit cooperatives with 500 members, three fish-raising cooperatives with fifty members, two water buffalo insurance cooperatives with 100 members, two cooperative tea houses with 1,000 members, and one cotton marketing cooperative with 500 members. All these members were taught how to elect their officers, to conduct their meetings, and to keep records. The total running budget of \$7,000 national currency for the center for 1937 was met locally from sales of the farm, service charges of the cotton-gin house, cooperative enterprises, and membership fees. The people in the community considered the center as an organization of their own and looked to it for help and advice.

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A Selected Bibliography on Communism and its Significance for Christianity

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